



CRITICAL INQUIRY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Purpose

Critical inquiry promotes active engagement with the key ideas and theories of a discipline and encourages students to pursue avenues of advanced knowledge and questioning. Critical inquiry is characteristic of higher education and Lincoln Education Australia (LEA**) is dedicated to fostering critical inquiry in its higher education courses so that LEA students develop independent and critical thinking skills and capacity to engage with ongoing, life-long learning.

The *Critical Inquiry Policy and Procedures* establishes the mechanisms through which LEA shall promote critical inquiry amongst its students by incorporating the skills of critical inquiry into its teaching and learning activities and tasks.

**The trading name for the Lincoln Institute of Higher Education (LIHE) is Lincoln Education Australia (LEA).

POLICY

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and students at LEA and all members of the Corporate Governance Board.

Principles

LEA is committed to fostering critical inquiry amongst its students for promoting development of life-long learning skills.

All teaching and learning activities at LEA are conducted with the objective of promoting academic freedom and cultivating critical and independent thinking as a graduate attribute of the Institution

As such, LEA shall foster a learning environment that adopts an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning and incorporates methods and approaches of critical inquiry into teaching, learning, assessment, and research activities.



PROCEDURES

Academic Board

The Academic Board, under delegated responsibility from the Corporate Governance Board, is responsible for oversight of academic quality, including approving curriculum that meets the expected high standards of scholarship and rigorous learning outcomes, including the development of students' critical inquiry abilities.

Corporate Governance Board

The Corporate Governance Board is responsible for ensuring the teaching and learning budget adequately supports the continued delivery of high-quality curriculum and LEA's continued compliance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (2015)*.

Course Development

All courses offered at LEA shall support development of the skills required to engage in critical inquiry, with broad, coherent and advanced levels of knowledge acquisition to promote ongoing and lifelong learning amongst its students. As part of the course development process, the Academic Board, though delegated responsibility to the Course Advisory Committee, Teaching and Learning Committee, Assessment and Awards Committee and Course Coordinators, shall ensure that courses at LEA:

- Foster cognitive and critical thinking skills at a level appropriate to the course;
- Offer core subjects that engage students in analytical and critical thinking;
- Offer core subjects that engage students in critical evaluation of key concepts, theories and research; and,
- Incorporate teaching and learning activities and assessment tasks that integrate critical thinking, both independently and through collaboration and peer discussion.

Academic Staff

Academic staff at LEA shall support students in the development of problem-solving, critical and analytical thinking and research skills. To ensure students are adequately supported in their pursuit of advanced levels of inquiry, all teaching staff shall be required to encourage critical inquiry in their disciplines, drawing from industry experience where appropriate.

LEA's academic staff shall be required to keep up-to-date and engage with the current research into their disciplinary fields and to maintain connections and engagement with the industry of their expertise, as appropriate. In doing so, LEA academics shall demonstrate to students the various ways in which methods of critical inquiry may be incorporated into ongoing professional practice.

LEA's *Professional Development Policy and Procedures* further ensures that the critical inquiry skills of teaching staff are continually developed to ensure staff engage students with the level of critical inquiry appropriate to the AQF level at which they teach.



Compliance

All staff and students at LEA are required to comply with this policy and its procedures, and with related policies and respective procedures. Non-compliance may result in disciplinary action.

File Number	LEA-GEN-COR-70024-D
Responsible Officer	Chief Executive Officer
Contact Officer	Academic Dean
Legislative Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015• <i>Australian Qualifications Framework</i>• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011
Supporting Documents	
Related documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Academic Freedom Policy</i>• <i>Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy</i>• <i>Course Development and Approval Policy and Procedures</i>• <i>Higher Education Workforce Policy and Procedures</i>• <i>Teaching and Learning Plan</i>• <i>Professional Development Policy and Procedures</i>
Superseded Documents	
Effective Date	1 January 2022
Next Review	3 years from the effective date

Definitions

Academic Board: Governing body responsible for academic matters, including learning and teaching, course approval, workforce planning, academic staff appointments, research and professional development, academic policies and procedures, overseeing student grievances and appeals processes.

Academic staff: Staff employed at LEA in a learning and teaching capacity.

Assessment: Process of grading, marking and reviewing student assessment tasks against the assessment standards and criteria. This includes devising and using assessment criteria, standards and grading rubrics; reviewing and comparing the marks and grades awarded to individual student submissions for an assessment task within a unit of study.

Assessment and Awards Committee: Committee of the Academic Board that is responsible for providing advice on assessment practices and standards, and awards.

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF): National guidelines that regulate Australian post-compulsory education and training qualifications. The framework identifies learning outcomes for each AQF level and qualification, policy requirements, educational and economic objectives, governing and monitoring arrangements.



Corporate Governance Board: Governing body responsible for oversight of all higher education operations, including the ongoing viability of the institution and the quality of its higher education delivery. The Corporate Governance Board guides the Management and delegates responsibility for academic matters to the Academic Board.

Course Advisory Committee: Committee of the Academic Board responsible for providing advice on the development and review of subjects and courses.

Course Coordinator: Senior academic staff member responsible for the delivery, planning and development of a course, particularly subject curriculum information, and works in conjunction with other academic staff, the Academic Board and its relevant Committees.

Critical Inquiry: Describes the analytic and research process of closely evaluating the key theories and ideas of a subject unit so as to consider the alternative and/or conflicting perspectives and understandings of an idea. Critical inquiry produces well-considered analyses that can challenge accepted ideas and spark new avenues of research and inquiry.

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015: The national standards for higher education all higher education providers must meet as established by TEQSA.

Subject: Unit of study offered in a semester in which students enrol as part of a course, for which a degree is awarded upon completion.

Teaching and Learning Committee: Committee of the Academic Board responsible for monitoring the quality of learning and teaching at LEA, including progress towards achieving objectives of the *Teaching and Learning Plan* and the adequacy of all forms of support for learning and teaching present at LEA.

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA): Australia's regulatory and quality agency for higher education. TEQSA's primary aim is to ensure that students receive high quality education at any Australian higher education provider.

Teaching Staff: Staff employed at LEA in a learning and teaching capacity.



Review

This policy shall be reviewed by the Academic Board every 3 years.

Version History			
Version number:	Approved by:	Approval Date:	Revision Notes:
1.0	Academic Board	13/08/2020	New policy
1.1	Academic Board	22/02/2023	TEQSA and CRICOS requirements incorporated